

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 233236 TOSEC 270433

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EXDIS -FOR SECRETARY FROM JENKINS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:MASSIR, SA

SUBJECT: ARMS SALES PROPOSALS IN CONGRESS

1. TOMORROW PHIL HABIB FACES THE FASCELL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HIRC AND ROY ATHERTON GOES BEFORE THE HUMPHREY SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SFRC. BOTH SUBCOMMITTEES ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE ARMS SALES PROPOSAL TO SAUDI ARABIA, I.E., SIDEWINDERS, MAVERICKS, AND TOW MISSILES. THE IRANIAN F-16 DEAL, WHILE DRAMATIC AND AN AVAILABLE TARGET, IS LESS VULNERABLE THAN THE SAUDI MISSILE SALES. AT THIS JUNCTURE, I FEEL CONFIDENT WE WILL WEATHER THE CRITICISM WITH NO ADVERSE VOTE ON THE F-16S. I AM LESS SANGUINE REGARDING THE SAUDI SALES.

2. THE OPPONENTS OF THE \$6 BILLION TRANSITION QUARTER ARMS PACKAGE FALL INTO TWO GROUPS: THOSE WHO OPPOSE ARMS SALES IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE PERSIAN GULF, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 STATE 233236 TOSEC 270433

AND THOSE WHO OPPOSE ALMOST ANY SALE TO ARAB COUNTRIES.

THE FORMER HAS A CHAMPION IN MONDALE AND RECEIVES AVID SUPPORT FROM SENATORS NELSON, PROXMIRE, AND OTHERS. THE LATTER GROUP IS MORE FORMIDABLE, COMPOSED AS IT IS OF THE SAME MEMBERS WHO FOUGHT SO TENACIOUSLY AGAINST THE C-120 SALE TO EGYPT. THE REAL RISK IS THAT THE

TWO GROUPS WILL CONVERGE TO SEEK SYMBOLIC DEFEAT OF THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE SALE OF MISSILES TO SAUDI ARABIA.

3. WE WILL HAVE A BETTER FEEL FOR THE STRENGTH OF THE OPPOSITION TO THE SAUDI PACKAGE AFTER THE HEARINGS TOMORROW. IT APPEARS THAT THE COMPROMISE LEVELS DISCUSSED WITH JAVITS AND CASE A MONTH AGO (850 SIDE-WINDERS AND 650 MAVERICKS) MAY NOT HOLD. MUCH DEPENDS ON WHETHER SENATOR CASE FINALLY DECIDES TO ACCEPT THE COMPROMISE NUMBERS. WE ARE ENCOURAGING THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR VIEW TO BE IN ATTENDANCE TOMORROW. THE SHORTNESS OF TIME AND THE CROWDED LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE. ROBINSON

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